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A special aspect of the task of the invention is to provide an apparatus which allows for the simplified and improved technical engineering of cold processing and subsequent annealing of a metallic billet, and in particular a billet made of or containing aluminum.

Page 2, please delete the last two paragraphs on that page.

Page 3, please delete the first full paragraph and substitute with the following:

A2  
10069302-05002  
The present invention proposes an annealing apparatus for annealing a metallic billet which has at least two contact elements made of electrically conducting material which are electrically connected to a voltage source and induce an electrical current to flow through at least one respective segment of the billet when said billet is guided past to come into contact with said contact elements. The contact elements are made of a metal or a metal alloy which matches that of the billet's material to such an extent that basically no material from the billet diffuses into said contact elements. The contact elements are configured as contact plates.

Page 3, please delete the second full paragraph and substitute with the following:

A3  
The billet is preferably of a light metal or a light metal alloy. A billet made from aluminum or aluminum alloy is especially preferred. The contact element material is preferably that of the same light metal as is contained in the billet material. It is especially preferred when the contact element material is an alloy of the light metal.

Page 5, please delete the last full paragraph and substitute with the following:

A4  
The present annealing apparatus is preferably disposed with a cold-processing means for processing the billet in cold state whereby it is preferable to draw the billet into the cold-processing means. Particularly preferred is the physical positioning of the cold-processing means in front of an annealing path in the material flow direction. It is preferred to have a plurality of cold-processing means whereby one or more annealing paths are positioned after at least one of the cold-processing means in the material flow direction.

At page 6, please delete the second paragraph and substitute with the following:

~~The billet is preferably moved through the thin oil following the annealing process.~~

Page 6, please delete entire last paragraph with carryover to page 7, and substitute with the following:

It is preferred that the billet is moved in the transport direction from a cold-processing means through at least one annealing path and subsequently through a cooling section, whereby said cold-processing means is disposed with one or more dies of which a terminal die constitutes the last die in the transport direction. In thus doing, a protective gas atmosphere is provided between the terminal die and the preferably oil-employing cooling section.

Page 7, please delete the second full paragraph and substitute with the following:

It is preferred for the annealing apparatus to be disposed with a drawing means, particularly configured as a draw plate, and which can subject the billet to a force which induces the billet to be moved along the transport track at a consistently uniform tension. Such drawing means, draw plate respectively, is preferably disposed with a separate motor, or a motor which is allocated solely to the drawing means, for driving the drawing means, draw plate respectively.

Page 7, please delete the fourth full paragraph and substitute with the following:

It is especially preferred to have a regulating device control the rotational speeds of the different contact plates such that billet slippage is prevented, and notably also including when the billet expands subject to annealing path temperature. Certain predefined parameters can in particular be employed for the regulating control such as annealing temperature, or a parameter representative of the billet material, the length of the annealing path, the diameter of the billet, etc.

Page 7, please delete the fifth full paragraph and substitute with the following:

A9  
In a procedure in accordance with the present invention, the contact elements employed in the annealing apparatus preferably contain aluminum when a billet containing aluminum is to be annealed in said annealing apparatus. Such contact elements are connected to a voltage source such that a billet containing aluminum which comes into physical contact with the contact elements as it is passed by, receives an electrical current flow through its respective sections between the contact elements which induces a heating of the billet such that it is annealed at low stress.

Page 8, after third full paragraph, please add a new centered heading as follows:

#### Brief Description of the Drawings

Page 8, after description of Fig. 1, please add a new centered heading as follows:

#### Detailed Description of the Invention

Page 8, please delete the sixth paragraph and substitute with the following:

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054002  
A11  
The annealing apparatus 10 depicted in Fig. 1 is disposed with a transport track 12 along which an aluminum-comprising billet 14 can be moved. The aluminum-comprising billet 14 is drawn through a die 18 arranged at the end of cold-processing means 16. The aluminum-comprising billet 14 is then moved through an area provided with protective gas 20. A part of this area in which the aluminum-comprising billet 14 is moved through the protective gas 20 is an annealing path 22.

Page 8, please delete the seventh full paragraph and substitute with the following:

A11  
The annealing path 22 is bordered by a first contact plate 24 and a second contact plate 26. The first contact plate 24, which is in particular a negative pole, is preferably a draw plate able to exert a force on the aluminum-comprising billet 14 so as to move it.

Page 8, please delete the eighth paragraph and substitute with the following: